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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert the following paragraph on page 1, above the title:

## TITLE OF THE INVENTION

Please insert the following paragraphs on page 1, above line 1:

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

## Field of the Invention

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The invention relates to a method for joining an initial section of a film tube wound in a band-like manner on a reel with an end section of a second film tube, especially for packaging systems, ~~in accordance with the preamble of claim 1 and a packaging system in accordance with the preamble of claim 22.~~

Please insert the following paragraph on page 1, above line 7:

Prior Art

Please insert the following paragraph on page 5, above line 15:

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Please replace the paragraph on page 5, beginning at line 15 with the following paragraph:

It is therefore the object of the present invention to avoid longer standstill periods of the entire system during a change of the tube roll. It is a particular object that after the joining of the old with the new film tube a tube is produced again whose opening cross section at the joining point is not reduced or reduced only marginally. The invention relates especially to tubes with side folds where the band-like initial section and optionally the band-like end section comprise a side fold which extends in the longitudinal direction of the film tube and faces inwardly. This goal is achieved by one or more embodiments of the invention ~~the characterizing features of claim 14 and claim 22.~~

Please replace the paragraph on page 5 beginning at line 27 and ending on page 6, line 23, with the following paragraph:

One or more embodiments of the invention relate ~~Claim 14~~  
~~relates~~ to a method for joining an initial section of a film tube which is wound up in a band-like manner on a reel with an end section of a second film tube extending over subsequent processing stations, especially a packaging system, in an at least partly band-like manner, with the band-like initial and end section each having two mutually superimposed outer lateral surfaces which each converge in their boundary regions into two interposed, inwardly folded inner lateral surfaces which thus form an inwardly situated fold axis. It is now provided for in accordance with the invention that in the two outer boundary regions of the end section a tab each is formed by placing a cut, which tab is joined in a tension-proof manner with the opposite initial section, with the initial section overlapping the end section, and the placement of the cut on the end section is carried out in such a way that a tab each which projects in the longitudinal direction of the film tube is formed in the boundary regions of the end section, which tab is inserted between the inner lateral surfaces of the initial section and is joined to the initial section in a tension-proof way. This ensures that the film tube of the consumed tube roll forms an approximately

continuous film tube with the new tube roll, which film tube extends over the entire system. For this purpose it is not necessary that the joining section forms a tight tube section because the joining section need not necessarily be used for the filling. It must offer a tension-proof connection however so that the two joined film tubes can be smoothly guided through the further sections of the system and especially the mandrel can be transferred from the old film tube to the new film tube. In particular, the method in accordance with the invention ensures that after the joining of the two film tubes a tube is produced again whose opening cross section is not reduced at the joining point or reduced to only a marginal extent.

Please replace the paragraph on page 7, lines 5-14, with the following paragraph:

For producing such a tension-proof connection it is provided for in accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention ~~claim 14~~ that a tab each is formed in the two outer boundary regions of the initial or end section by placing a cut. Such a cut can be placed in different ways. The placing of the cut can occur ~~in accordance with claim 2~~ in the two outer boundary regions of the initial section along the inner fold axis, and the thus formed tabs are each placed at the initial section from the

outside onto the outer lateral surfaces of the end section and are joined to the same in a tension-proof way. In order to place the cut a cutting element arranged on either side of the film tube is used by horizontally moving the cutting element from a first position in which it is spaced from the film tube to a second position in which it slits open the film tube laterally in the longitudinal direction of the film tube.

Please replace the paragraph on page 8, line 1, with the following paragraph:

The placement of the cut in the end section ~~according to claim 16~~ can especially occur in such a way that slots are formed in the boundary regions of the end section which each extend in the longitudinal direction of the film tube into which the respective inner side surfaces of the initial section are inserted along their fold axis. It would also be possible to form not only slots, and thus produce laps in the boundary regions of the end section, but to cut out a portion of the entire central region of the end section.

Please replace the paragraph on page 8, lines 1-4, with the following paragraph:

It can also be provided in accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention claim-17 in an advantageous manner that the width of the tabs corresponds substantially to the width of the respective inner lateral surfaces of the initial section.

Please replace the paragraph on page 8, lines 5-9 with the following paragraph:

It is provided for in accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention claim-18 that the tension-proof connection of the initial and end sections of the film tubes is formed by welding. In particular, welding methods on the basis of ultrasonic sound have proven to be advantageous ~~in accordance with claim-19.~~

Please replace the paragraph on page 8, lines 10-13 with the following paragraph:

Prior to placing the initial and end section above one another it is advantageous in accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention claim-20, if the initial section is widened by means of negative pressure or electrostatic methods.

Please replace the paragraph on page 8, lines 14-20 with the following paragraph:

As was already mentioned above, welding methods are preferably used for producing a tension-proof connection. In an ~~An advantageous working method is defined in claim 21, according to which~~ for welding the initial and end sections of the film tubes, a welding anvil is each laterally inserted between the inner lateral surfaces. A tab each and a boundary region each of the initial and end section is placed thereon and welded together.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 21, and ending on page 9, line 8, with the following paragraph:

~~Claim 22 relates~~ One or more embodiments of the invention ~~relate~~ to a packaging system with a reel on which a film tube is wound up, a positioning and tensioning station which unwinds the film tube from the reel and supplies to subsequent sections of the system, a packaging unit for processing a film tube section and a conveying device for removing packaged goods. It is provided for in accordance with the invention that at least one cutting apparatus for cutting the film tube and a welding station for processing the film tube is arranged between the positioning and tensioning station and the packaging unit, with the cutting apparatus being a cutting element arranged on either side of the film tube, which cutting element is horizontally movable from a first position in which it is spaced from the film tube to a

second position in which it slits open the film tube laterally in the longitudinal direction of the film tube.

Please replace the paragraph on page 9, lines 9-14 with the following paragraph:

The welding station is used for producing a tension-proof bonding. In accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention claim 23, an ultrasonic welding unit is concerned. In accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention claim 24, pivoting suction means are arranged between the positioning and tensioning station and the packaging unit which are used for widening the initial section ~~according to claim 20~~.

Please insert the following paragraph on page 9, above line 15:

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Please insert the following paragraph on page 13, above line 6:

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS